

USU Academic Quadrathlon Team Finishes Second at Regional Competition

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A team of students from Utah State University's College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences placed second at the Western Region Academic Quadrathlon held at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho. The event, hosted by the American Society of Animal Science, tests students' knowledge of the animal industry in four ways: a laboratory practicum, a written exam, an oral presentation and a quiz bowl.

Students Joe Coles, Anisa Samhouri, Shan Sherwood and Frances Shoaf won the USU Academic Quadrathlon earlier this year which allowed them to advance to the regional event. The local level competition is put on by USU Animal Science Club Advisor Brett Bowman. Students explained that the local event is derived from animal science courses taught at USU.

After coming out on top at the local event, the team dedicated themselves to giving the competition their best effort and met weekly to review content and study together. Each team member "specialized" in certain aspects of the animal industry, such as swine or nutrition. They even reached out to other students who were knowledgeable in specific areas of the industry and asked these individuals to teach the team.

The regional event took place over two days and included schools from across the western United States. The team placed first in the lab practicum and quiz bowl, second in the written exam and third in the oral presentation, ultimately leading to a second-place overall finish. The team finished only one point behind the first-place team.

Coles, Samhouri and Sherwood had competed together on an Academic Quadrathlon team previously, and each brought unique strengths to the team. However, they all lacked a knowledge of the equine industry, which they saw as a weakness. This led them to reach out to Shoaf, who is a co-captain of the USU Western Equestrian team and has shown horses professionally for many years.

Shoaf is studying agricultural education, with minors in equine science and american sign language. Her course of study has focused primarily on teaching, so joining the Academic Quadrathlon team gave her the opportunity to delve more into animal science for a wide range of species.

"It's a team effort and you really rely on your team and then your team really relies on you," Shoaf remarked. "You're not in this alone by any means."

Samhouri joked that taking the Academic Quadrathlon as seriously as they did could be perceived as "nerdy," but also expressed that they had fun as they learned more about the animal industry. Team members agreed that it was a very valuable experience and are grateful for the guidance of their mentor, Brett Bowman, who advocates for the event at Utah State University.

Left to right: Frances Shoaf, Joe Coles, Anisa Samhouri and Shan Sherwood

Team members identify parts of the reproductive system during the lab practicum.

USU team after winning the final round of the quiz bowl.

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